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# THE SEIP MOUND

BY  
WILLIAM C. M'LLS

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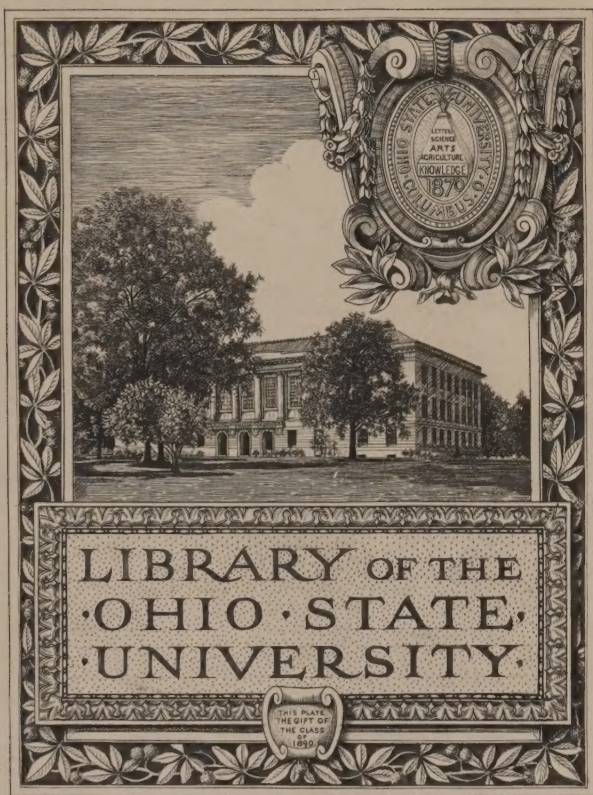
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## THE SEIP MOUND



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## THE SEIP MOUND

BY

WILLIAM C. MILLS

**T**HE Seip Mound is situated within the largest prehistoric earthworks of the Paint Creek valley of Ohio, known as the Seip Group.<sup>1</sup>

One very large mound and another half its size, enclosed with earthworks, which form a combination of two circles and a square, and five mounds situated outside the earthworks but in close proximity to them, constitute the Seip Group. This group is situated in Paxton township, Ross county, Ohio, about three miles east of Bambridge, a village in the extreme western portion of the county. The mounds can readily be reached by conveyance, as the old Milford and Chillicothe pike passes in sight of the works and the Detroit Southern railway has a flag station only a quarter of a mile away.

Paint Creek valley has long been known for its beautiful scenery and productive soil. It is drained by Paint creek, a stream of irregular turbulence, crossing from one side of the valley to the other until it finally empties into the Scioto river south of Chillicothe.

The mounds and earthworks comprising this group occupy the greater portion of the rich agricultural bottom-land in the

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<sup>1</sup> Described by Squier and Davis in *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, pp. 4, 58.



great bend formed by Paint creek as it changes its course from the north side of the valley directly to the south side, where it follows the base of the foothills for some distance.

At the present time one can readily trace the circles, but the square with its various openings cannot be so readily followed. Yet, when the site is freshly plowed, the old walls are easily discerned by a slight elevation and the change in appearance of the soil. The mounds, which are all quite large, have deteriorated less than the earthworks, but the farm cultivation of the few outside the walls has greatly reduced them in height.

The two mounds within the walls have suffered little by the encroachment of agriculture. The larger of the two mounds is known as the Pricer Mound, and at the present a number of large native trees are growing upon its top and sides. It is about twenty-five feet high and 240 feet long. The mound has been fenced about, and the enclosure is now used as a sheep pasture, consequently the surface of the mound is devoid of the usual growth of weeds and bramble so common to the large mounds in Ohio.

#### SITUATION AND DIMENSIONS

The Seip Mound, named in honor of the Seip brothers, the present owners of the land, is about half the size of the Pricer Mound and is situated upon the same terrace, only a short distance to the east of the larger mound (see plate I).

Squier and Davis, in their drawing of this group, note the Seip Mound as three distinct mounds, as shown in plate II. I have classed the group as one mound, though made up of three separate but connected mounds, as our explorations afterward



revealed. This feature is invariably present in all large mounds of this culture group.

The measurements of the various sections of this mound differ greatly. Commencing at the western end of the mound, which was the largest, the height from outside measurements was eighteen feet; but as the explorations progressed, the mound was found to be twenty feet and one inch high, making the base two feet and one inch lower than appeared from the general level of the surrounding surface. The diameter of this section north and south was 120 feet. The second section, closely connected with the adjoining one on the east, was eleven feet ten inches high with a diameter north and south of seventy feet. The third section was not on a line east and west with the other two sections, but was placed to the south, as shown in plate II, and clearly connected with section 2. It was six feet high with a diameter of forty feet.

#### SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE EXTERIOR

The mound for the greater part was composed of loam or surface soil, obtained upon all sides of the mound and in close proximity to it. The top of the first section, or larger mound, was composed of clay and limestone gravel. This combination, in the course of time, became cemented together, and proved quite a problem in its removal, as almost every portion had to be picked loose before a shovel could be used. Another feature of the mound was discovered shortly after work was begun on the north side by finding, near the base, several flat stones, averaging from ten to fourteen inches, so placed as to resemble steps. A further examination revealed a series of flat stones, from eighteen





THE SEIP MOUND

Showing the Beginning of the Work upon the Third Section of the Mound. The Pricer Mound in the rear to the left







to twenty inches under the surface, extending from the base toward the top of the mound. The steps were no doubt used to aid in reaching the summit of the mound with the heavy loads of earth, in the effort of the builders to complete the monument.

Another external feature frequently met with in the mounds of this culture group is the use of gravel in construction; but, in this mound, gravel of large size, with the appearance of having been screened, was placed entirely around the base of the mound, to a depth of two feet, and in many places the depth reached two and one-half feet. The width varied from seven to five feet, and at times was a great hindrance to the workmen, as the gravel had to be removed in order to expose the base of the mound, and at times could not be shoveled but had to be removed by hand.

Only one large pin-oak tree was left standing upon the mound by the owners, and this was variously estimated, before removal by us, to be from 100 to 175 years old, but when cut, and the rings of growth counted, it was found that the tree probably did not exist when the mound was first noted by Atwater in the *Archæologia Americana*, 1820.

#### SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE INTERIOR

Many very interesting features, as compared with other mounds of this culture group, were brought to light in the examination of the Seip Mound.

First, the site of the mound exhibits three separate inclosures, circular in form, as evidenced by the post-molds, extending into the base of the mound. The post-molds had charred wood at the top of the mold, indicating that the posts



at one time extended above the surface, and no doubt formed the sides of the building, or charnel-house.

Second, the object of the mound was a monument to the dead, placed over the site of the charnel-house. The burials were similar in many respects to those of the Harness Mound,<sup>1</sup> but differed in many instances as to the number of cremated dead placed in a prepared burial cist. All the burials placed in the charnel-house were cremated, and graves were prepared for the reception of charred bones and ashes of the dead.

Third, the burials in the mound were of two kinds, cremated and non-cremated. The cremated remains were all placed upon the floor of the charnel-house, while the non-cremated were promiscuously placed in various portions of the mound above the base line, only one having a prepared grave for the reception of the body.

Fourth, the builders of the Seip Mound were similar in character to those of the Harness Mound, and represented the highest culture of prehistoric man in Ohio.

The special features enumerated above can be better understood by further discussion, and I shall attempt in the following pages to give a detailed account of the examination of this mound.

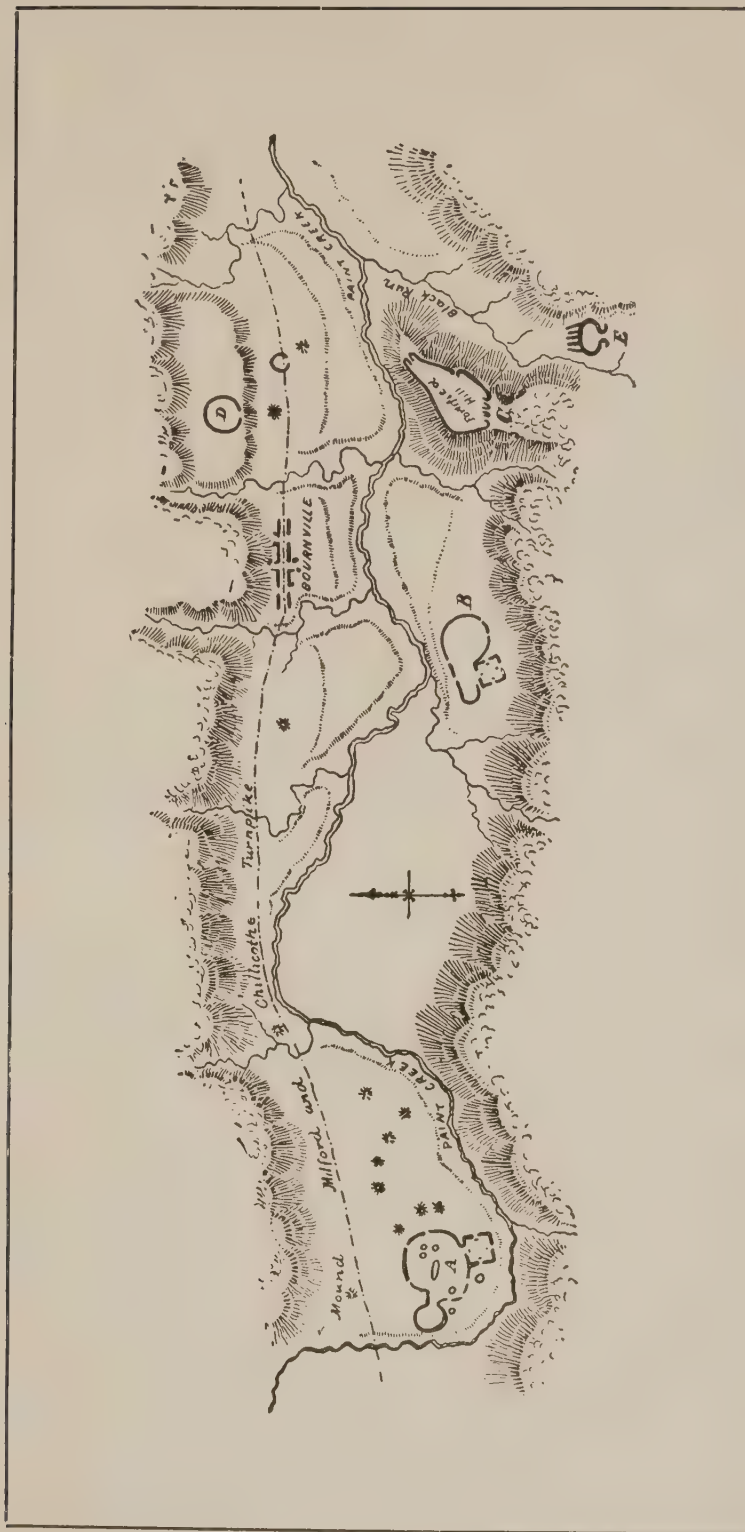
#### THE MOUND SITE

The Seip Mound is situated practically in the center of a large circular earthwork which, for the most part, occupies the third terrace of the Paint Creek valley. The surface of this portion of the terrace is quite level, but this particular spot selected

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<sup>1</sup> Explored in 1903, and described by William C. Mills in *Certain Mounds and Village Sites in Ohio*, 1.





SIX MILES OF PAINT CREEK VALLEY

*A*, Seip Group of Mounds. *B*, Baum Works. *C*, Spruce Hill Works







by the builders was somewhat lower than the surrounding surface. Perhaps the surface soil, which had been removed almost to the gravel, had been used in the construction of the large Pricer Mound, which is only a few hundred yards away. After selecting the site, the building was constructed by placing large posts in the ground to a depth averaging two and one-half feet. These were so placed as to form a circular building sixty feet in diameter east and west, and seventy-two feet in diameter north and south. These posts, forming the outside of the building, averaged two and one-half feet apart. Two entrances to the building were found — one to the northwest, and one to the east. The entrance to the northwest was of peculiar construction, and made by the walls overlapping each other, forming a passageway or hall about three feet in width and seven feet in length. The passageway was covered with a fine sand varying in thickness from two inches to half an inch, and so firmly packed as to have the appearance of coarse sandstone.

The floor of this section of the mound was very irregular, as shown by the examination. On the south side but little fill was required to make the floor level. As the north side of the floor of the charnel-house was approached, it was found that seventeen inches of a fill was required to make the floor level. This fill was made with logs, brush, gravel, and clay. The logs and brush were piled in the lowest places, and covered with clay and gravel. In the course of time the logs decayed, but the imprint or mold remained. Very frequently the molds connected with the large upright post-molds, extending deep into the base. At first glance one might infer the builders had some



design other than building up the floor to a common level; but a careful examination revealed nothing beyond the use of logs as a filler in building the base or floor to a uniform level.

The entrance to the charnel-house from the east was a short passageway from the second circular charnel-house. The passageway was only about three feet in width and two and one-half feet in length. The floor was also covered with fine sand.

The second section was also a circular charnel-house measuring forty-three feet east and west, and thirty-two feet north and south. The floor of this section did not require very much, if any, filling to make it level. The outside posts formed the sides of the building, and were quite large on the north side, while those used for the other portions were similar in size to the first section.

The openings in this section were two — one leading into the first section, as described, and the second leading into the third section, with practically no passageway, as the third section was built to the southeast of the second section. The third section was oblong, the longer diameter (which was north and south) being twenty-two and one-half feet, and the shortest diameter (east and west) fifteen feet. The floor of the third section was prepared and leveled in the same manner as the other two sections. The posts used in the construction of the sides of this section were all smaller than those used in the other sections.

#### THE OBJECT OF THE MOUND

The object of the mound was a monument to the dead, erected over the site of the various charnel-houses described above.



Before the monument was erected, the superstructure was destroyed by fire, as evidenced by the charred remains of the posts forming the outside walls, as well as of the posts promiscuously distributed throughout the interior of the structure, which perhaps supported the roof. For the most part the upright posts were burned off at the base-line; but now and then a large post was not entirely consumed, and a portion of the charred remains extended, in many instances, several feet above the base and was preserved, while the portions of the posts extending into the ground were entirely decayed, only the post mold remaining. Very frequently the post-molds showed a perfect imprint of the bark; while in others knots, limbs, or any imperfection in the log was visible. In several instances large quantities of bog iron had formed in the mold.

#### CREMATED BURIALS

All the remains of the dead placed in the charnel-house were cremated, and I shall describe each section, as they differed somewhat one from the other.

In the first section, which was the first charnel-house erected, and the largest of the group, many of the prepared graves were so constructed that one or more burials could be placed in the same burial cist. This was done by preparing a large platform of prepared clay (pl. IV, *b*), usually six to seven feet in length and four feet wide, and building up the sides and ends with round logs, varying in diameter from five to three inches, to the height of eighteen or twenty inches. A cover was placed over the top, which was made up usually of split pieces instead of round



pieces used for the sides and ends. Clay was then placed around the sides and ends to firmly hold the logs in place.

Four burials, as shown in plate IV, *b*, were the largest number found in a grave; but two or three burials were met with quite frequently. The large graves were placed near the center of the charnel-house, and large passageways, often six to seven feet in width, intervened. Near the large graves a cluster of small post-molds, varying in number from five to seven, were found. These posts were usually placed about a foot apart, but not in any particular order. Frequently the floor around the posts was covered with great quantities of charred cloth, ornaments, and implements; and occasionally the floor was covered with mica, as shown in plate V, *a*. The mica was usually placed so as to cover the floor completely, and only the natural mica crystals, split in many pieces, were used.

It seems very probable that the cluster of posts near the graves were the sacred shrines for the dead; and here the clothing, and very frequently some of the most interesting ornaments — such as cut and polished human jaws, large effigy eagle-claws, bear teeth set with pearls, pendants of ocean shells, and shell and bone beads in great numbers, and in a few instances, copper ornaments — were found, with the charred woven fabrics, promiscuously placed upon the floor surrounding the posts. At one of the shrines a quantity of charred rope almost four feet in length, and a number of effigy eagle-claws made of bone, were found. The rope was three-ply, and made of course bast-fiber, perhaps that of basswood.

The graves placed near the outside walls were all smaller than those placed in the center of the charnel-house and con-





Plan of examination, with men at work



The Third Section and part of Second as shown by stakes placed in the post-molds  
EXCAVATION OF THE SEIP MOUND







tained only the remains of one individual; in this respect they were similar to the burials of the Edwin Harness Mound.<sup>1</sup>

All the burials in this section of the mound, which numbered twenty-four, were cremated at the large crematory situated just inside the northeast entrance. The crematory, when uncovered, was perfectly devoid of ashes or human remains, and measured six feet by eight feet, the longer diameter being east and west.

All the graves, both large and small, in this section, were of the plain elevated platform kind, so common in the Edwin Harness Mound. The platform type was made of clay, and invariably elevated from six to ten inches above the floor of the charnel-house. The platform was usually higher in the center, gradually sloping to the sides and ends, where logs averaging about six inches in diameter had been placed, usually in the form of a parallelogram. The clay used in the construction of the grave had the appearance of having been puddled before being used; and in many instances, after the coating of puddled clay had been placed over the grave, a fire was built and the clay burned to a light red. The ashes and any charcoal that might remain were removed before the incinerated remains were placed in the grave.

As stated, the single graves in the first section were similar in construction to those of the Harness Mound, but showing difference in the final ceremony. In the Harness Mound, after the incinerated remains were placed in the grave, objects of clothing, together with straw, bark, or twigs, were placed over

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<sup>1</sup> The Edwin Harness Mound is situated eight miles south of Chillicothe, along the Scioto. Explored by William C. Mills, 1903, and described in *Certain Mounds and Village Sites in Ohio*, I.



the remains and set on fire; while burning, clay was covered over the grave, thus preserving the cloth, the grass, and twigs in a charred state. This ceremony was dispensed with in this section of the Seip Mound; the incinerated remains were placed in the prepared grave, and a covering of wood, usually split pieces, was placed over the top, and the grave covered with earth to a depth of a few inches.

For the most part, adults were buried in this section; yet in the grave containing four burials, one was an adolescent, and in another, a very small child was placed by the side of an adult. All the burials in this section were rich in copper implements and ornaments, placed in the graves.

The graves in the second section were similar in construction to those of the first section; all being of the platform type, however, they varied greatly in size from the ordinary single grave to a very large size (twelve feet two inches long by four feet five inches wide) and contained the remains of two individuals, so placed as to occupy the ends of the grave. The intervening space was not used, due perhaps to the fact that this section, together with the third section (which did not contain a single burial), was abandoned before the house was filled.

The burials in the second section were placed around the side walls, and the center was devoid of graves.

The final ceremony of burning straw, bark, and clothing over the remains, similar to the burial methods at the Harness Mound, was in evidence in nine burials of the nineteen found on the base of the section, and only one of the nineteen was cremated in the grave where the remains were found.





Uncovering the floor of the mound



A family burial cist containing four cremated burials  
EXCAVATION OF THE SEIP MOUND







The floor of the third section of the charnel-house was entirely devoid of burials, and at only one point, which was near the west side, did the floor show any signs of having a fire built upon it. Here the earth was burned to a deep red. Perhaps a body had been cremated there, and the remains deposited in one of the other sections.

Perhaps no definite reason can be given for erecting a monument over an unoccupied site; but the most plausible reason, when taking into consideration the second section, which was only partially filled, is that the site was abandoned, the charnel-houses burned, and the mound erected over all as a monument to the dead.

#### NON-CREMATED BURIALS

The five non-cremated burials found in the various sections of the mound were promiscuously placed at various heights from the base-line, and only one had anything like a prepared grave for the reception of the body. The grave was placed three feet above the floor of the charnel-house in Section 2. The bottom of the grave was formed of large slabs of slate, and the body was laid at full-length upon the slabs and covered with soil.

One burial was found in the third section, two feet and a half above the floor. No grave was prepared, and the body was doubled up and laid on the mound, and was covered with earth, similar to the burial in Section 2.

The two burials evidently were individuals who died during the building of the mound, as their implements of copper and ornaments of shell were identical with those found in the

graves of the cremated dead placed upon the floor of the charnel-house.

The other three burials were found in Section 1. One burial, that of an adolescent, was placed seven feet above the floor, and was buried similar to the one in Section 3, with no apparent grave prepared for the body. The ornaments of bear-teeth set with pearls, and a large string of ocean-shell beads, were similar to those found with the cremated dead placed upon the floor.

The remains of the other two burials of this section were placed together in a double grave, ten feet above the floor. The grave was evidently dug into the side of the mound, as the outlines of the grave were very noticeable. The remains, when placed in the grave, were perhaps for the most part devoid of flesh, and had been carried from some distant part of the country, or had been temporarily buried in some convenient place where the bones could be collected and afterward placed in the mound. The various parts of the skeletons were promiscuously placed in the grave: the skulls were placed upside down, and only a few inches apart; the lower jaws were detached and placed in another part of the grave; the arm and leg bones were placed side by side, and several bones of the hands and feet were entirely missing.

One large copper plate (ten inches in length and five inches in width) and a fine copper axe (four inches in length and two inches in width), together with large strings of ocean-shell beads, were found near the bottom of the grave. The implements and ornaments were similar in every respect to those found upon the floor of the charnel-house.





Floor of shrine covered with sheets of mica



The post-molds in the second section  
EXCAVATION OF THE SEIP MOUND





My conclusions are, concerning the non-cremated dead promiscuously placed above the floor of the charnel-house, that they belong to the same culture represented by the cremated dead placed upon the floor of the charnel-house; that three of the individuals died during the time required for the erection of the mound, and the custom of cremation was dispensed with; that the two dismembered individuals placed in one grave were disinterred, and the remains brought to the mound and buried with the dead belonging to the same culture.

#### THE ARTIFACTS FOUND WITH THE BURIALS

The artifacts taken from the burials of this mound, as a whole, were very interesting, although in the second and third sections but few implements and ornaments were placed in the graves; but in the first section, almost every burial was prolific in implements and ornaments of copper, mica, shell, and stone.

From the forty-eight burials contained in the three sections of the mound were obtained upward of two thousand specimens, representing the highest art of prehistoric man in Ohio.

The material from which the implements and ornaments were made came from widely separated regions. The copper used in making the implements and ornaments no doubt came from the Lake Superior region; the ocean shells used in making drinking-cups, pendants, and beads, perhaps came from the Gulf; and the mica which was so universally used for ornament came from North Carolina.

The finding of so much material so remote from the sources of supply indicates that the ancient inhabitants of this section

had an intertribal trade, for it seems impossible that the Ohio tribes visited these widely separated points.

#### ORNAMENTS OF COPPER

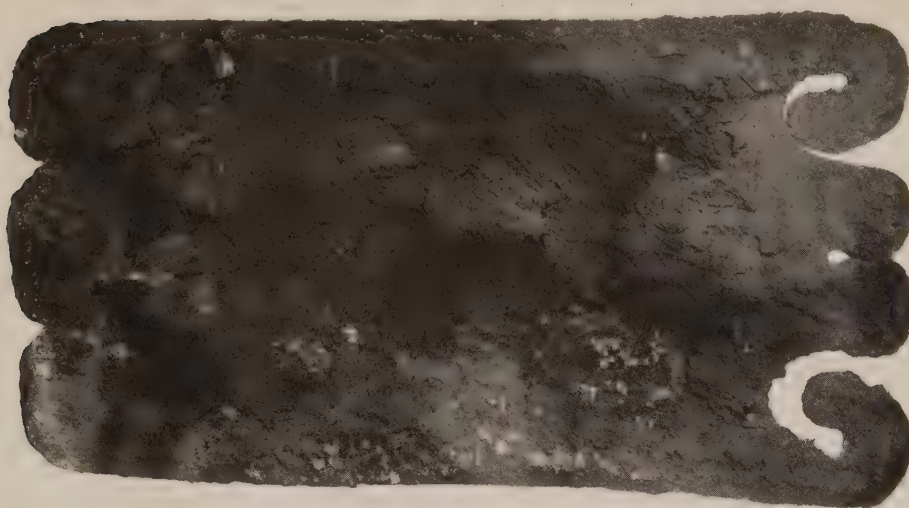
The best preserved specimens found in the graves are the implements and ornaments made of copper; and perhaps, next to the ear ornaments, the most interesting of the copper ornaments are the large copper plates, of which sixteen were found in the various sections of the mound. The plates are made each of one piece of native copper, hammered to about an eighth of an inch in thickness; and a few were found that would approach a sixteenth of an inch in thickness. The plates vary in size from ten inches and a half in length by five inches and a half in width, to three inches and a quarter in length by two inches and a half in width. The plates are made in the general form of a parallelogram, with the ends cut concave and the sides straight; however, one plate has a large scroll cut on one side, as shown in plate VI, *a*, and one plate has both ends cut into ornamental forms, as shown in plate VI, *b*. A large plate, size ten inches and a half long by five inches and a half wide, and covered with cylindrical beads made of ocean shell, is shown in plate VI, *c*. This copper plate, together with three more, almost equal in size, and the two ornamented plates described above, were all taken from the same grave. On account of the special features of this burial cist, I will quote from my field notes:

Grave No 19, which was placed within six feet of No 18, and directly north of it, was the largest and finest so far discovered in this mound. The cist was made by preparing a platform of clay, the highest point of which was 10 inches above the floor of the charnel-house, and 4 inches above the first logs laid around this platform to form the walls of the cist. The side-walls of





*a.* Large copper plate with scroll cut in side



*b.* Copper plate with ends ornamented



*c.* Copper plate with shell beads attached through corrosion

COPPER PLATES FROM THE SEIP MOUND





the cist were 18 inches high, and made in the form of a parallelogram—7 feet 3 inches in length, and 4 feet in width. The molds of the lower logs were fully 7 inches in diameter, while the upper logs varied from 5 to 3 inches in diameter. The usual split pieces, as indicated by the molds, were placed over the top. The clay forming the top of the platform had been burned. Upon this platform were placed two burials—one at the south end (which was burial No 21), and one to the east side (which was burial No 22). They were so placed that further burials could be placed in the cist.

Burial No. 21, which occupied a portion of the south end of the cist, was an adult, and, from the general appearance of the incinerated bones, was, no doubt, a male. Before the incinerated bones had been placed in the grave, a tanned skin of some animal was placed at the bottom of the cist. Upon the skin was placed a large copper axe,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, 4 inches wide at the bit, and 3 inches wide at the pole. The axe was also wrapped in leather, which was preserved by the salts of copper. The incinerated remains were placed in a pile over the copper axe, and covered with a coarse matting of bark.

Between burials 21 and 22 was placed a large spear-point that was very much broken by heat.<sup>1</sup>

Practically the same preparation was given burial No. 22. The tanned skin was placed on the bottom of the cist, and large copper plates, 6 in number, were placed upon the covered platform. Two of the plates differed greatly from the other four, in being decorated with scrolls and scallops upon the sides and ends. Over the plates a very long string of beads was coiled. The beads were made of ocean shell, cylindrical in form, and varied in length from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch. The beads were firmly attached to the plate by corrosion of the copper. On each side of the copper plates was placed a single ear ornament of copper, also seven large pieces of ocean shells, several of them 6 inches in length and about an inch in width. Each was perforated with two holes, one at each end, for attachment, and so made as to be not visible from the convex side. This was done by boring a small hole at about the middle of the square end, to a depth of  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, and connecting this hole with another, bored from the con-

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<sup>1</sup> After the entire contents of the grave were shipped to the Museum and examined, the various pieces of the spear were found and fully restored: Length, 9 inches; width,  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

cave side of the shell. Ten or twelve bear-teeth, which had been split and polished into thin gorget-like forms, and perforated with two holes, were placed around the outside of the copper plates.

The cremated remains were then placed over the ornaments, and several thicknesses of matting, made of bark, were placed over all.

Between the two burials, but near to No. 22, was located an adult human skull with lower jaw.

The plates and other objects found in the grave could only be superficially examined in the field, and the most interesting points were necessarily left until the objects were brought to the laboratory.

The copper plate shown in plate VI, *a*, is perhaps the heaviest and smoothest of all the plates taken from the mound. The scroll pattern cut upon one side of the plate makes the specimen unique so far as the Ohio mounds are concerned. The plate was wrapped in leather when it was placed in the grave, and portions still adhere to the plate, as shown in the illustration.

The plate shown in *b* is perhaps also unique. An attempt has been made in this plate to decorate the ends instead of the side. The work of cutting the scrolls is not so perfect and graceful as in the other plate, but it is more elaborate. The intervening portion between the scrolls is cut into scalloped forms. The other end of the plate is divided into three scalloped sections, and each section has a repoussé decoration at the center. The specimen is covered with several layers of cloth, and repoussé decorations do not show so prominently in the figure.

The plates taken from other graves in the mound were similar in form and size to those contained in the grave described. However, one grave contained two copper plates, a large and a small one, together with eight other copper orna-



ments. The larger one presented a new feature in copper plates. The original plate was reinforced by being covered with another plate, a little larger in all of its dimensions. The edges were hammered down over the original plate in such a manner as to resemble the work of a modern artisan.

Copper ear-ornaments were frequently met with in graves, and twenty specimens were secured. They were invariably found in pairs. The manufacture of these ornaments required skill as well as a high degree of advancement in decorative art. The form of manufacture of the ear-ornaments, although two different types were found, is similar. One type is made of two concavo-convex plates which are connected by a cylindrical column; but only a few pairs of this type were found. The other type, which is more common, is made of four plates of copper, two of which are circular and two concavo-convex. The concavo-convex plates are attached to the circular pieces which form the inside of the ornament. The discs are connected with a small cylinder of copper.<sup>1</sup>

Other copper ornaments were found sparingly in the burial cists. From one grave a large copper crescent was removed, and from another, six large copper balls.

Only two kinds of copper implements were found in the mound — awls and axes. The awls, four in number, vary in length from seven inches and a half to three inches. The awls are usually round, tapering to a point at both ends, although one specimen has one end blunt, the body flat, and the other end tapering to a point.

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete description of this type of ear-ornaments, see *Certain Mounds and Village Sites in Ohio*, 1, Sec. 3.

The copper axes are unusually interesting on account of their variation in size. The largest is six inches and a half long and four inches wide at the bit, while the smallest is two inches and a quarter long and an inch wide at the bit. Nine axes were taken from the various sections of the mound, and all are of the plano-convex type so common in the Scioto valley. They are made from masses of native copper, and the irregularities of the surface are quite pronounced in many of them.

#### BONE OBJECTS

Bone implements and ornaments are always associated with prehistoric man in Ohio, and the implements of bone and teeth played an important part in the life of the builders of this mound. The bone objects may be grouped under two heads, utilitarian and ornamental. Under the utilitarian objects are placed bone digging-tools, needles, awls, etc.

The bone digging-tools were frequently met with outside the graves and scattered through the soil of the mound. The tools are simply large fragments of the femora and shoulder blades of large animals, such as bear, deer, and elk. The bones were used in digging the soil preparatory to its use in building the mound. The tools naturally would be carried to the mound, and frequently one would be lost when the load of soil was deposited thereon.

Bone awls or bodkins were for the greater part destroyed when the bodies were cremated, as many pieces of implements were found among the calcined remains; but several perfect pieces were found.



The awls were invariably made from the tarso-metatarsus of the wild turkey by cutting away the anterior part of the bone almost to the center, and carrying this cut through to the posterior end.

The awls vary in length from three to four inches, and the points have a gradual taper and are very sharp.

Great skill and much labor were required to make the bone needles of the type found in the mound. They are usually made from the strong metapodial bone of the deer. The needles are usually from three to five inches long, gradually tapering from the head to the point. The head is invariably flat, and pierced with a small hole near the end. The hole is bored from both sides. In one of the graves was unearthed a large curved needle, eight inches in length, made of the rib of some animal. The eye of the needle is placed three-quarters of an inch from the end, and in many respects resembles the needles found at Fort Ancient.<sup>1</sup>

Many ornaments of bone and teeth were found in perfect condition with the burials in the mound, but many of the most valuable and interesting were destroyed by fire when the bodies were cremated. A large number of ornaments made of bear-teeth were perforated for attachment; the teeth were cut horizontally and the halves highly polished, and perforated with two holes near the center.

The most interesting of the bone ornaments are those of the effigy eagle-claws. They were found in several graves; but the finest specimens were found at one of the burial shrines.

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<sup>1</sup> Explorations of the Baum Village, in *Certain Mounds and Village Sites in Ohio*, 1.

The effigy claws are made of the rib-bones of the elk, and very often exceed four inches and a half in length.

Several cut and polished human jaws, with the teeth intact, were removed from one of the burial shrines; this, however, was not an uncommon find in this culture group.

A large tooth of an alligator was unearthed, and from another grave four more teeth of the same reptile. The large tooth is two inches and a half long and almost three-quarters of an inch in diameter. The teeth are all perforated for attachment. So far as records go, this is the first instance of finding alligator-teeth in the mounds of Ohio.

#### ORNAMENTS OF SHELL

Ornaments such as pendants and beads were found abundantly, and all are made from ocean shell. From one grave almost a thousand beads, made from ocean shell and averaging half an inch in length, were removed.

From one burial a beautiful string of pearls, in a good state of preservation, was obtained.

The flint implements and the various objects made of slate and granite were not abundant in the graves, but a number of excellent examples were procured.

#### TEXTILES

In a number of graves of the second section the final burial ceremony consisted of setting fire to the covering of straw, twigs, and cloth, and here the charred remnants of cloth and matting are preserved. In the first section, the charred cloth, showing the simplest to the highest art in primitive weaving, was found



at the burial shrines outside the graves. The builders of the Seip Mound had learned well the art of textile making, for we know that the true textile art began with the spinning or making of the yarn. This, of course, requires the separation of fibrous tissue from the plant, and twisting the fibers so as to make a strong yarn. The cloth was made from bast-fiber, secured from many of the trees and plants known to exist in prehistoric times.<sup>1</sup>

#### POTTERY

Fragments of broken pottery were found in almost every portion of the mound, and in several instances potsherds of good size and representing a high type of fictile art were found in several of the graves, but were not associated with the charred remains.

It seems strange to find a people so well versed in the fictile art, being able to produce objects in pottery, as shown by the discarded sherds, that required great skill and patience in order to create the symmetry and grace displayed, who would not in some way use it in their mortuary customs.

#### OBJECTS OF MICA

Large blocks of mica were found in many graves, as well as in the shrines of the burial cists, where the blocks often completely covered the floor. The detached thin sheets were often cut into geometrical designs and figures, and perhaps served as objects of personal adornment, as many of the pieces have perforations for that purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> Specimens of cloth were subjected to microscopical examination by Prof. J. H. Schaffner, head of the Department of Botany, Ohio State University, who pronounced the cloth to have been made of bast-fiber.

## RÉSUMÉ

A concise account of the examination of the Seip Mound having been given, a brief mention of the more salient parts brought out by this examination might be of interest.

The site of the mound was a charnel-house where the dead were brought and prepared for the grave. The preparation consisted of cremating the body, and afterward placing the incinerated remains in a prepared grave within the charnel-house. The site was abandoned before the house was filled, the building destroyed by fire, and a mound erected as a monument to the dead.

The charnel-house consisted of three distinct sections, and the size of the mound erected over the various sections was perhaps gauged by the standing or importance of the dead occupants.

Over the first section the mound was twenty feet high, and the house contained twenty-four burials, most of which were rich in copper and other objects.

The monument over the second section was eleven feet ten inches high, and the house contained nineteen burials. Only a few of these contained objects of copper, and other implements and ornaments were very sparingly found; while the third section was five feet high and did not contain a single burial on the floor of the house.

In the first section, graves were enlarged, and very often two and sometimes three and four burials, together with sufficient space for more, were recorded from a single burial cist. As not all the remains were those of adults, this condition would suggest that the large graves containing the remains of more than



one person were those of a family burial cist, and the wide floor-space between the cists made them readily accessible for burial at any time.

The profusion of implements and ornaments made of copper, shell, and bone, of a well-marked individuality, shows that the builders of the Seip Mound belonged to the highest culture of aboriginal man in Ohio, differing widely in customs and culture from the peoples inhabiting the Baum village site, only a few miles down the valley and practically in sight of the Seip Mound.

The data secured by the opening of this mound places this group in the Hopewell Culture,<sup>1</sup> and according to Prof. W. H. Holmes's<sup>2</sup> classification, the Northwestern Group.

The builders of the mound had an intertribal trade, as evidenced by the copper from the Lake Superior region, the ocean shells and alligator-teeth from the far South, and mica from North Carolina.

The great variety and quantity of woven fabrics obtained indicate that weaving was assiduously practised and formed one of the most important industries.

The examination of the mound proves beyond question that its builders were precolumbian.

COLUMBUS, OHIO

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<sup>1</sup> For my own convenience I have named the two great cultures, whose remains are so abundant in Ohio, Fort Ancient Culture and Hopewell Culture. "Explorations of the Baum Village Site," *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society Publications*, xiv.

<sup>2</sup> *Twentieth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology*.

Plan. 10. C. Miller

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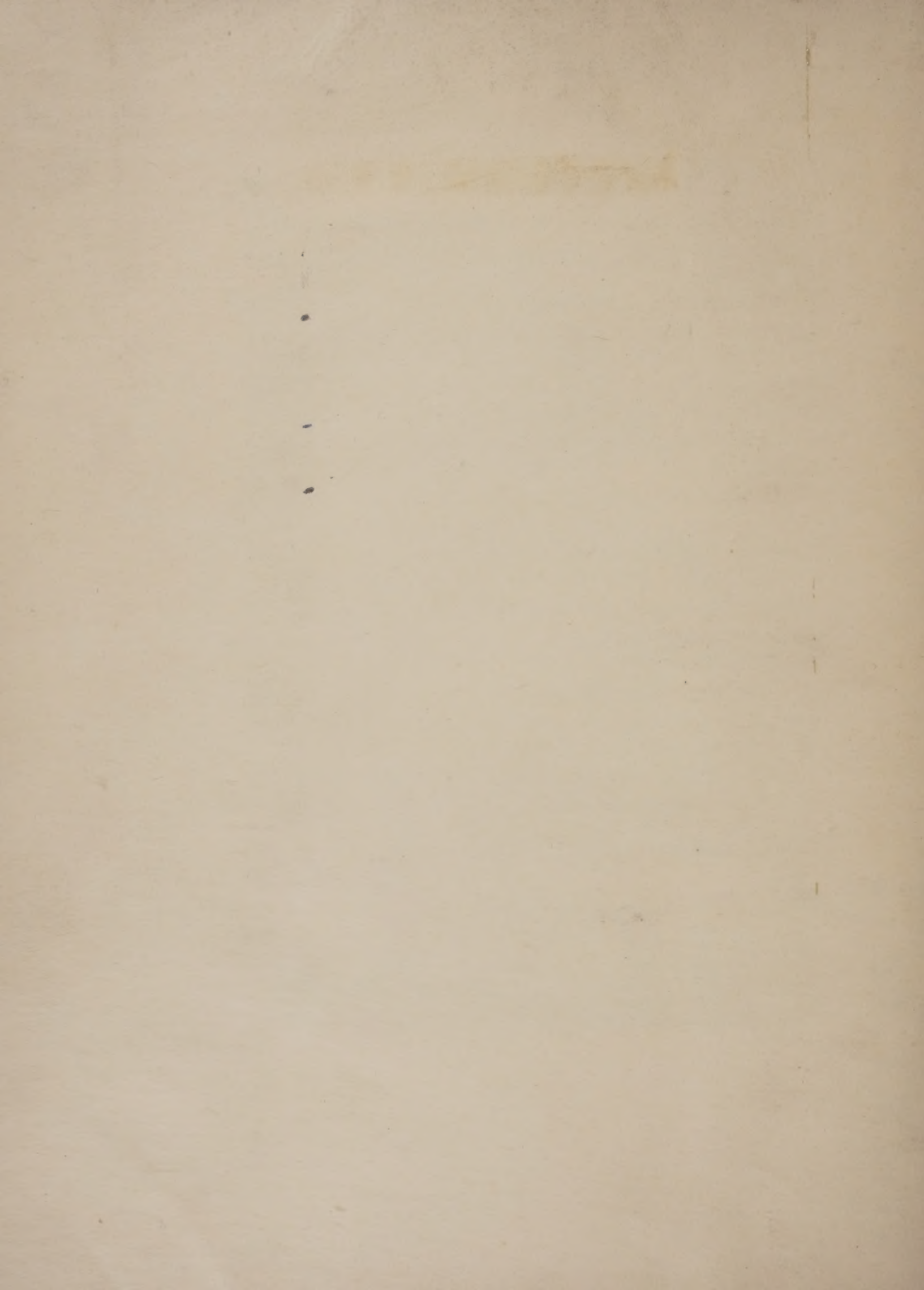
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